

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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FLEX President Joins Chamber Team

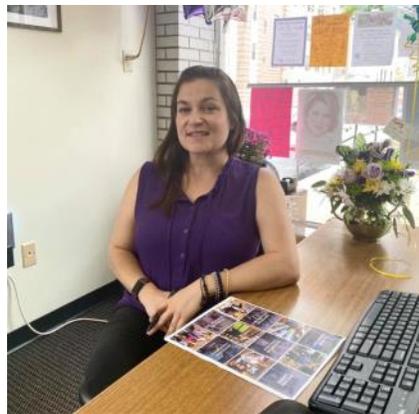
We love witnessing young professionals gaining skills and growing in their careers, and we're especially excited for Kat Thompson, FLEX President, as she begins a new journey.

Kat recently joined the team at the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce, the parent organization of FLEX, as Membership and Education Manager.

In her new role, Kat will focus on attracting and retaining chamber members, while also working to connect the business and education communities. Although she will focus on membership and education, Kat will assist with other Chamber programs, too, like FLEX and Be Here.

Not only has she helped FLEX grow as an officer over the years, she is now employed at the Chamber and will continue to help strengthen our group.

"One of my biggest values is building community, and I'm excited to be part of an organization that has a purpose of



building the business community and helping make our region better," Kat told us. "From being involved with FLEX, I already knew the team here, and I'm excited to work with a great group of people, including the Chamber staff, board, and members."

Kat credits FLEX to a lot of the skills and connections she has gained over the years. She has become familiar with the community, while strengthening her skills in communication, public speaking, networking, leading meetings, and more. She also is a 2020 graduate of Leadership Venango, the Chamber's leadership program, which helped

her grow and learn more about the community, too.

When asked what advice she has for other young professionals looking for a job transition or to try something new, Kat said: "We need people to show up and contribute their skills, try new things and grow, and to familiarize themselves with what we have here."

"This is a really unique place with a lot happening," she added. "I encourage you to focus on the good, figure out how you can join, and jump in."

Please join us in congratulating Kat on her new position! Reach out to her at her new email at kthompson@venangochamber.org.



Professional Development Tip: Share Your Leadership Daily

By Jennifer Feehan (Economic Development Manager & NW PREP Coordinator, Northwest Commission)

Just put yourself out there and get the ball rolling. Leadership is a word I had previously kept my distance with thinking it was a status you achieve when you have it all together. Knowing that was a stretch for me, I've always just plugged away trying my best wherever I was placed.

It wasn't until recently—being part of the Leadership Venango Program Class of 2021—that I came to the realization that my efforts in striving to serve others was a recognized form of leadership. I remember the moment it clicked during one of our sessions and was cognizant in seeing myself as a leader for the first time.

We are all leaders in some capacity and all have unique offerings to contribute, so we need to tap into our self-awareness and bring our piece of the puzzle to the table. Leading by example is the best place to start and will encourage others to take their step forward to get more involved. Some ways to lead by example include:

Be Honest

Communicate your message upfront. Keep it simple. Keep it straightforward. Deliver your words with



authenticity. Aim to be transparent and genuine. Honesty builds trust which will strengthen your mission.

Be Kind

Listen to others intently. Strive to be compassionate and make a commitment to offer empathy. Extend respect and conduct yourself ethically. Remain vigilant of surroundings and proactive to mitigate misunderstandings. Extend forgiveness and

do not make mountains out of molehills. Focusing on the positives will advance your vision.

Be Humble

Cultivate gratefulness and demonstrate appreciation. When a mistake is made, own it and make it right. Make efforts to be consistent, approachable, and reliable. Accountability will direct you in accomplishing your goal.

While there are many steps you can take to be a leader, being honest, kind, and humble can impact those around you each day. Best of luck on your leadership journey, and don't forget you ARE a leader and have something to contribute.

Join Us at Our Escape Room Social!

We're looking forward to our Escape Room Social on October 9th! We're heading to Unlock the Adventure in Titusville and we'd love for any local young professionals to join us.

The group will be split between two different themed rooms, and the Escape Room will take about an hour. Then we plan to grab a bite to eat at Titusville Iron Works afterwards.

The cost per person for the Escape Room is \$10 and food/drink afterwards is dutch treat. Registration is required ahead of time at: venangochamber.org/events. Contact us at flex@venangochamber.org with any questions.



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Member Profile: Joslyn Dechant



Joslyn Dechant is a Senior Strategy Analyst at UPMC Health Plan, and moved back to Franklin recently after living out of the area for two years.

Upon graduating from Franklin High School, Joslyn went on to Clarion University where she earned her bachelor's degree in Economics and International Business, followed by her MBA. "I'm most proud of putting myself through grad school in order to get a job more aligned with my interests and skillset," she told us.

After college, she worked in Clarion for eight years, then accepted a job with UPMC Health Plan and moved to Pittsburgh for two years. Due to COVID, she received permanent work from home status and decided to move back to Franklin to be closer to family.

"I enjoy the comfort and affordability of small town living and was excited to get the opportunity to come back to the area," she said.

At UPMC Health Plan, Joslyn had the opportunity this past year to earn her Six Sigma Green Belt. She plans to continue her growth as an analyst, while also getting more involved with the community now that she's home.

Some of Joslyn's hobbies include reading, crocheting, yoga, traveling, walking the bike trail, and attending theatre performances, especially at the Barrow-Civic Theatre. She's a fan of the peacefulness of small town living, and hopes to get more involved from a volunteer standpoint to help support local arts.

"While I don't work directly out in the community, I enjoy being back in my hometown and close to family. Franklin has a sense of community that isn't always easy to find elsewhere," she said. "I'm looking forward to making connections and friends. Working from home has a lot of perks, but it can be isolating and FLEX will help me form relationships with young professionals in the area."

Welcome back, Joslyn!

Member(s) Highlight: Ashley Smith & Ashley Sheffer

Congratulations to both FLEX Members Ashley Smith and Ashley Sheffer for their recent awards at the Oil Region Alliance's Annual Meeting!

Ashley Smith was named "Best Advocate" of the Oil Region, for her participation in the community and how often she spreads the good word about all there is to see and do here.

Ashley Sheffer accepted the award for the Be Here initiative for "Best Industry Partner," which is for an organization that contributes greatly to the offerings of the region.

The awards were given at the Oil Region Alliance's Annual Meeting on Thursday, September 23.



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September was a fun month for FLEX! Some young professionals volunteered at Cranberry Festival, and we also went on a food tour with A Bite of History.



OUR MISSION

FLEX represents the needs and interests of Young Professionals by positioning ourselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and advocates for the sustainability of the Venango Area through civic engagement, leadership development, and networking.

October Events & Meetings:

Events & Fundraising Committee: Monday, October 4 • 12-1 p.m.

Escape Room Social: Saturday, October 9 • 5 p.m. • Register at venangochamber.org/events

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, October 12 • 12-1 p.m.

Marketing Committee: Tuesday, October 26 • 12-1 p.m.

Contact us for meeting zoom links at flex@venangochamber.org, or find links in our Weekly Update email.

CONNECT WITH US:



WELCOME NEW FLEX MEMBERS

Simon Neft

Maggie Schwabenbauer

Levi Woodcock

Interested in joining?

Email the FLEX Membership Committee Chair Laura Ordaz at laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu or join online: VenangoFLEX.org.